

IX. CENTERS

Goal: Develop well-balanced attractive, convenient, robust commercial office, office, and residential development within designated Centers serving the City and the region.

Discussion: The Centers category of land use includes two areas of the City, the Center Village in the Highlands and the Urban Center located in the historic downtown and the employment area north to Lake Washington.

The Urban Center includes two sub-areas: Urban Center- Downtown (220 acres) and the Urban Center-North (310 acres). Together these two areas are envisioned to evolve into a vibrant city core that provides arts, entertainment, regional employment opportunities, recreation, and quality urban residential neighborhoods. The Renton Urban Center is envisioned as the dynamic heart of a growing regional city. Renton's Urban Center will provide significant capacity for new housing in order to absorb the city's share of future regional growth. This residential population will help to balance the City's employment population and thereby meet the policy directive of a 2:1 ratio of jobs to housing.

The Center Village designation is envisioned as a revitalized residential and commercial area providing goods and services to the Greater Highlands area. The area could potentially become a focal point for a larger area, the Coal Creek Corridor, connecting Renton to Newcastle ~~to~~ and Issaquah. While development is envisioned at a smaller scale than expected in the Urban Center, the Village Center will still focus on urban mixed-use projects with a pedestrian-oriented development pattern.

Objective LU-MM: Encourage a wide range and combination of uses, developed at sufficient intensity to maximize efficient use of land, support transit use, and create a viable district.

Policy LU-193. Promote the innovative site planning and clustering of Center uses and discourage the development of strip commercial areas.

Policy LU-194. Phase implementation of development within Centers to support economically feasible development in the short term but also provide a transition to achieve new development consistent with long term land use objectives.

Policy LU-195. Designate Center boundaries according to the following criteria:

- 1) The boundary should coincide with a major change in land use type or intensity;
- 2) Boundaries should consider topography and natural features such as ravines, hills, and significant stands of trees;
- 3) Boundaries should occur along public rights-of-way including streets or utility easements, or at rear property lines where justified by the existing land use pattern. Boundary lines should not be drawn through the interior of parcels; and
- 4) As a maximum distance, the boundary should be drawn within a walkable distance from one or two focal points, which may be defined by intersections, transit stops, or shopping centers.

Policy LU-196. Designate Centers in locations with the following characteristics:

- 1) A nucleus of existing multi-use development;
- 2) Potential for redevelopment, or vacant land to encourage significant concentration of development;
- 3) Center locations should be located on major transit and transportation routes;
- 4) Center locations should be served by the City's arterial street system.

Policy LU-197. Change adopted boundaries only in the following circumstances:

- 1) The original mapping failed to consider a major natural feature or significant land use that would make implementation of the boundary illogical, or
- 2) The amount of land within a Center is inadequate to allow development of the range and intensity of uses envisioned for the Center.

Policy LU-198. Support new office and commercial development that is more intensive than the older office and commercial development in existing Centers in order to create more compact and efficient Centers over time.

Policy LU-199. Allow stand-alone residential development of various types and urban densities in portions of Centers not conducive to commercial development, or in the Urban Center in districts designated for residential use.

Policy LU-200. Allow residential uses throughout Centers as part of mixed-use developments. Consider bonus incentives for housing types compatible with commercial uses or lower density residential that is adjacent to Centers.

Policy LU-201. Include uses that are compatible with each other within mixed-use developments; for example, office and certain retail uses with residential, office, and retail.

Policy LU-202. Locate and design commercial uses within a residential mixed-use development in a manner that preserves privacy and quiet for residents.

Policy LU-203. Modify existing commercial and residential uses that are adjacent to or within new proposed development to implement the new Center land use vision as much as possible through alterations in parking lot design, landscape, signage, and site plan as redevelopment opportunities occur.

Policy LU-204. Consolidate signage for mixed-use development.

Policy LU-205. Identify major natural features and support development of new focal points that define the Center and are visually distinctive.

Policy LU-206. Design focal points to include a combination of public areas such as parks or plazas, architectural features such as towers, outstanding building design, transit stops, or outdoor eating areas. These features should be connected to pedestrian pathways if possible.

Policy LU-207. Evaluate existing intersections of arterial roadways for opportunities to create focal points.

Policy LU-208. Consolidate access to existing streets and provide internal vehicular circulation that supports shared access.

Policy LU-209. Locate parking for residential uses in the mixed-use developments to minimize disruption of pedestrian or auto access to the retail component of the project.

Policy LU-210. Connect residential uses to other uses in the Center through design features such as pedestrian access, shared parking areas, and common open spaces.

CENTER VILLAGE LAND USE DESIGNATION

Purpose Statement: Center Village is characterized by areas of the City that provide an opportunity for redevelopment as close-in urban mixed-use residential and commercial areas that are pedestrian-oriented. These areas are anticipated to provide medium to high-density residential development and a wide range of commercial activities serving citywide and sub-regional markets. Center Villages typically are developed within an existing suburban land use pattern where opportunities exist to modify the development pattern to accommodate more growth within the existing urban areas by providing for compact urban development, transit orientation, pedestrian circulation, and a community focal point organized around an urban village concept.

Objective LU-CCC: Develop Center Villages, characterized by intense urban development supported by site planning and infrastructure that provides a pedestrian scale environment.

Policy LU-317. Apply the Center Village Designation to areas with an existing suburban and auto-oriented land use pattern, which, due to availability and proximity to existing residential neighborhoods, are candidate locations for a higher density mixed-use type of development.

Policy LU-318. Implement the Center Village Designation using multiple zoning designations including Residential ~~10-14~~ (R-~~1014~~), Center Village (CV), and Residential Multi-family (RMF).

Strategy 319.1. Evaluate commercial and residential development standards in the Center Village and replace zoning designations or re-zone with the vision for a Center Village designation

Strategy 319.2. Prepare a Highlands Plan as a sub-area plan to further refine the land use concept for and implement the Center Village land use concepts. Phasing of the Highlands Redevelopment Subarea Plan is expected to occur ~~over~~ within a 2 – 5- year period from the 2004 GMA update.

~~**Strategy 319.3.** Areas east of Edmonds and north of Sunset currently zoned RMF are to remain in residential use. The area north of 12th St. currently zoned R-10 is to remain in residential use.~~

Policy LU-320. Allow residential density ranging from [a minimum of 10](#) to [a maximum of 80](#) dwelling units per acre in the Center Village ~~Designation~~[designations](#).

Policy LU-321. Encourage mixed-use structures and projects.

Policy LU-322. Orient site and building design primarily toward pedestrians and people to maximize pedestrian activity and minimize automobile use for circulation within the Center [Village](#).

Policy LU-323. Accommodate parking within a parking structure. Where structured parking is infeasible [due to site configuration](#), parking should be located in the back or the side of the primary structure. ~~Discourage~~ [Parking](#) lots between structures and street rights-of-way [shall not be permitted](#).

Policy LU-324. Use alley access where alleys currently exist. Encourage designation of new alleys in redevelopment projects.

Policy LU-325. Encourage shared parking to use urban land efficiency.

Policy LU-326. Develop design guidelines to provide direction on site design, building design, landscape treatments, ~~and~~ parking, and circulation components of new development projects. Implementation of this policy should be phased within three years of the adoption of the 2004 Update.

Policy LU-327. Encourage uses in Center Villages that serve a sub-regional or citywide market as well as the surrounding neighborhoods.

Policy LU-328. Encourage more urban style design and intensity of development (e.g. building height, bulk, landscaping, parking) within Center Villages than with land uses outside the Centers.

Policy LU-329. Promote the clustering of community commercial uses and discourage the development of strip commercial areas.

Policy LU-330. Residential development within Center Villages is intended to be urban scale, stacked, flat and/or townhouse development with structured parking.

Policy LU-331. Prohibit new garden style multi-family development.

Policy LU-332. Provide community scale office and service uses.

